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LETTER DATED 15 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARMENIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to forward to you herewith a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorno Karabagh on 15 June 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Movses ABELIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorny Karabakh

The Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan has recently been disseminating reports on an alleged attack by units of the armed forces of Nagorny Karabakh in the Martakert sector of the line of contact between the sides.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorny Karabakh states that this information, like the figures indicating high losses by the Karabakh side, does not correspond to the actual course of events.

In fact, on 14 June 1999, Azerbaijani formations, having violated the ceasefire regime, once again attempted to move their positions into direct contact with Nagorny Karabakh's lines of defence. In order to avoid a further escalation of tension, units of the Nagorny Karabakh defence forces, demonstrating the requisite restraint, opposed the advance of the Azerbaijani armed forces. After sustaining losses, the opposing side was compelled to withdraw to its initial position. Two soldiers of the Nagorny Karabakh defence forces were wounded.

Against this background, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorny Karabakh once again draws the attention of all interested parties to the successive steps taken by official Baku aimed at disinforming the international community for the purpose of concealing the true situation in the conflict zone. The latest fabrications by the Azerbaijani propaganda machine regarding "deliveries" to Nagorny Karabakh of Chinese-manufactured "Typhoon" multiple rocket launchers should be viewed in the same context.

The Azerbaijani side's rejection of the latest proposals by the Co-Chairman of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the revanchist claims by Azerbaijani politicians, in the first place the Minister of Defence, Safad Abiev, leave no doubt as to the ultimate aim of the policy of provocation and disinformation, namely to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh problem by means of force.

The fragile peace that has now been maintained in the region for five years thanks to the military and political balance that has been established and to the efforts of the international community must not be made dependent on the nationalist ambitions of Azerbaijan's present leaders.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nagorny Karabakh confirms the Karabakh side's devotion to settlement of the conflict with Azerbaijan exclusively by peaceful means, through negotiations, and calls on the leadership of Azerbaijan

to refrain from the propaganda of hatred and the policy of disinformation and to initiate constructive dialogue among all parties for the purpose of speedy and comprehensive settlement of the existing problems.

Stepanakert, 15 June 1999